

Plainfield Council on Aging

January 2021 Newsletter



Plainfield Council on Aging
Town Offices, 304 Main St.
Plainfield, MA 01070

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January Notes and Tips during Covid-19



The Plainfield COA hope you all had a safe and wonderful holiday season during this difficult time.

Food Assistance

The Hilltown Church Food Pantry is located at the Ashfield Congregational Church on Main Street. It provides food from local farms and stores. Its hours are every other Tuesday from 3-6 pm. For eligibility questions, call (413) 625-0020.

Snow Removal

If you are looking for someone to help shovel your walk or driveway, contact the Plainfield Mutual Support Network as they might have a few names available to assist you.

The Old Creamery Winter Hours

Winter hours are Monday through Sunday from 7 am to 8 pm.

Zoom Lessons

For any of you who would like to learn how to contact family and friends via the Zoom program. Zoom is offering free classes on the many aspects of connecting and holding get-togethers. Check out this web page: <https://zoom.us/events>



Highland Valley Elder Services Masks

The Plainfield COA still has some cloth masks kindly donated by the Highland Valley Elder Services. These masks are free and are made of a soft black cloth with the HVES logo. If you need masks, please call Susan (LaRock) Honneus at 743-5345. (She was married on Saturday, November 21st to her long-time partner, David Honneus.) Please leave a message with your name and phone number indicating the number of masks you require. Sue will get back to you shortly as she checks her voice mail several times a day.

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) is still going strong and ever present in town during the pandemic. Our group of volunteers can help with grocery shopping, pharmacy needs and will also reach out to individuals who might like a friendly smile or visit on the telephone. We continue in a safe environment of social distancing and quarantine requirements and wearing a mask when out in public is a must.

Again, for your information, the PMSN web page is (plainfield-ma.us/supportnetwork). One can also check out our Facebook page, (plainfield mutual aid and support) for additional information. You can also call (413)634-1030 for requests or more information. Please leave a voicemail and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We have also added the HCDC COVID-19 Hilltown Response to our web page (hilltowncdc.org/covid19) for further information and as a valuable resource.

Flu Clinic Update

Because of this year's pandemic, if you need a flu shot, the following update may be helpful:

- **Hilltown Community Health Center in Worthington:** Call Mary Kane at (413) 238-

4131 to make arrangements for a flu shot if you have been unable to receive one elsewhere.

- **Pharmacy:** Check with your local pharmacy for flu vaccine availability, as to whether or not you need to make an appointment, and do remember to bring your medical information with you, i.e., Medicare card, insurance, etc.

Easy Ride Options

Transportation by Easy Ride can take FRTA registered riders to pharmacies. They can also make pickup and deliveries as long as the medicine is paid for. Riders can call us to make an appointment and for more information. (413) 296-4232

Exercise Classes

For all us stay-at-homers, Joan Griswold is continuing to offer her exercise classes via Zoom in the new year. Classes are held on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday each week. If you are registered for one of her classes, you may attend any and all weekly classes. We are truly fortunate she has been willing to invest her time and knowledge so we can stay active and healthy. Because we are not meeting in person during the pandemic, donations have dropped off. The Plainfield COA would appreciate any assistance you can give us to defray costs. Please send your donation to: The Plainfield COA Exercise Class, 818 West Main Street, Plainfield, MA 01070. For those of you who have given donations already, we offer a hearty thank you for your continued support.



In-Home Services

In addition to the services offered by either the PMSN or the COA, additional information can be had through State Home Care (SHC) cost-sharing breakdown at: www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eligibility-guidelines-for-home-care.

Through the SHC programs, folks can access in-home foot care services along with a variety of other services. Some relatively new additions to our SHC service offerings include:

- ⇒ Laundry services- pick-up and delivery to the home, contact free.
- ⇒ Transportation services- 1:1 rides can be accompanied by one other person such as a caregiver. These will accommodate medical and social rides. Unfortunately, this service is unable to accommodate those who are wheelchair bound or unable to transfer independently.
- ⇒ Durable medical equipment- access to items like rollator walkers, raised toilet seats, incontinence products, lift chairs, among many other items that individuals need, when not covered by insurance. Delivered right to the home with assembly assistance provided for most items.
- ⇒ Nutritional supplements such as Ensure and Boost.

The Information & Referral Department can be reached at (413) 586-2000. If you are not exactly sure what you need or have an interest in, please speak with one of the Options Counselors.

The Plainfield Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to help build important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Plainfield Council on Aging. My contribution of \$ _____ is attached.
(Please write your check to The Town of Plainfield and mail to Plainfield COA, 304 Main St. Plainfield, MA 01070)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Plainfield Council on Aging

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



I am sure that we are hoping that 2021 will be a much better year than 2020. But whatever happens with COVID, January will still be January with its cold, ice and snow; and we Hilltowners will be driving in that stuff. Here are a few things that you can put in your car that will help you if you get stuck in the weather:

- ⇒ A flashlight with extra batteries
- ⇒ A first aid kit and manual
- ⇒ Jumper cables.
- ⇒ Flares
- ⇒ Blanket, hat, mittens, shovel, windshield scraper, sand, tire chains, fluorescent distress flag, caution triangles.

Have a SAFE New Year!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.



Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at **regionalcoanews@gmail.com** to be put on the email list. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

List Plus Calendar Equals a Plan

So along about this time of year, I often write about things that could be New Year’s resolutions, or not, depending. If you don’t believe in making resolutions, that’s ok, but I have a suggestion for you. Make a list! Associate that list with a calendar, and **ta da!** You have a plan! This a way to make a possibly overwhelming task doable, and so much in life improves with a plan, I do believe.

The plan to which I refer is based on a list which is based on things you really should do to make life easier for yourself and for those who follow behind you. Remember the Big Five? They are the will, health care proxy, durable power of attorney, advance directive, and HIPAA privacy release. No surprise, they will now and again require a review and update. Last year to those five we added the task of keeping up with your credit reports, and I’m going to add three more – writing a Letter of Instruction, compiling relevant information, and preparing a budget.

Why the calendar? If you take these nine items and assign them a calendar month, then you can spend a few minutes a month dealing with them one at a time. You will then have three months to do as you please!

First, pick your lucky number (between 1 and 30, ignoring February’s limitation) if you have one. Then pick one of the nine items and pair it with a month. Write them all down on your list and in each month of a calendar on your lucky number day. It doesn’t matter a whole lot what month you use, but you might want to use March to check your credit reports because this task is free and easy until the end of April. If you haven’t done this, go to **www.annualcreditreport.com/reviewYourReport.action**. Look at each one now, dispute anything that is wrong, get it fixed, then start the annual cycle of checking.

Contact me if you need a refresher on the Big Five, and Plan Away!

Jean O’Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

This month's good news is about an often forgotten benefit called Health Safety Net.

This program was started back in the 1950s when we were investing in our nation's infrastructure, building interstate highways, schools, hospitals and clinics. As is the case with much federal funding, the money to build our hospitals and clinics came with a mandate, a promise to provide care for patients with limited financial resources. Decades ago, this program was called "Free Care" and helped provide medical treatments/services, usually in the hospital's ER, for those patients without insurance, struggling to pay medical bills. More recently it was called "Uncompensated Care Pool" meaning hospitals and federally funded clinics could bill for patients if they had no insurance and limited income.



These days it's called "Health Safety Net" which is a much better name because this program provides a safety net for those whose insurance isn't covering all their bills.

Example: if you are hospitalized and have Medicare, but no supplemental insurance, you are responsible for paying the hospital deductible of \$1400 and most likely some co-pays for medical treatments received. If you meet the income guidelines, Health Safety Net could cover these costs.

The interesting thing about Health Safety Net is that this benefit eligibility regulation does not count assets. If you are single, your income needs to be below \$1,595/month. If your income is as high as \$3,190/month....you would still qualify for partial Health Safety Net. Married couples income needs to be less than \$2,155 for full benefits, but can be as high as \$4,310 for partial coverage.

Health Safety Net covers any co-pays or deductibles for a hospital stay and any medical services you receive in a federally-funded clinic (like the Hilltown medical centers). Yes, this includes dental care you might receive there.

The good news gets better. If you are having difficulty paying for your Rx because even though you have a Medicare D plan, or insurance through your retirement pension, your co-pays are really high: Health Safety Net pays for your Rx if you use the pharmacy in a federally-funded clinic like Holyoke or Chicopee medical centers. Their pharmacies take "outside scripts", meaning your doctor can call in your Rx to that pharmacy and you can pick it up free, or with a very low co-pay. Health Safety Net will be billed.

Example: over the years, I have had folks with inhalers with big co-pays, some medications for osteoporosis or glaucoma with co-pays of several hundred dollars a month. If they meet the income eligibility guidelines, Health Safety Net will pay for their Rx.

Health Safety Net is not MassHealth. It is a Federal program. But in Massachusetts, you apply for HSN by filing a MassHealth application. For help with that, you can call your senior center and ask for a SHINE counselor.

Where in the Hilltowns can you get help with food?

Winter is on our doorstep, the pandemic is still with us and having choices for safe access to food still is a challenge. Here are some of the options available:

- ⇒ **The Hilltown Food Pantry** in Goshen is open on Wednesdays from 1-3pm and every third Wednesday from 1-6pm. It offers food at no cost for everyone.
- ⇒ **Chesterfield residents** can pick up food at the Community Cupboard on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9-11am. Located at the Community Center, it's available for people who need to avoid traveling to box stores, facing financial difficulties or could benefit from help for related reasons. No registration or release of personal information needed.
- ⇒ **Highland Valley Elder Services Meals on Wheels program:** Call (800) 322-0551 to find out more about their Home Delivered Meals and to learn the latest in adaptations made during COVID-19
- ⇒ **Take and Eat.** Our Lady of the Hills Church and Williamsburg Congregational Church offer residents in the hilltowns a meal program called "take and eat". Volunteers prepare meals each Saturday and deliver those meals to residents who have requested them. Anyone wishing to receive a free meal please contact Nancy Wood at 268-7978.
- ⇒ **Hilltown Food Bucks**, offered through HCDC. Eligible participants can receive between \$100-\$125 food coupons per month for five months to be used at participating local stores and farms. The coupons double your spending power when you make a purchase, so a shopping basket worth \$80 can be paid for with \$40 of coupons and \$40 of your own money. For questions on the Hilltown Food Bucks program, please contact Kate Bavelock, Director of Community Programs, at kateb@hilltowncdc.org or 413-296-4536 x116. Participating Retailers: Corners Grocery Store in Worthington, Chesterfield General Store, Old Creamery Coop in Cummington, Moltenbrey's Market in Huntington, and the Williamsburg Market.
- ⇒ **The Plainfield Mutual Support Network** has

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an account set up at The Old Creamery in Cummington for folks in need. In Worthington, the Sawyer Farm is offering food pickup. First-timers get \$20 off their first order. Contact info needed.

⇒ **Cummington:** Groceries & prescription pick-up/delivery. Call 634-5452 or email cummington-certcvhelp@gmail.com to arrange, as well as grocery deliveries from the Creamery and Sawyer Farm on Tuesdays and Fridays. Orders must be in by Mondays and Thursdays at 2 p.m. **Emergency food:** If you find yourself in need of food and cannot wait until your next grocery trip or next pick up from the food pantry, CERT can help you. Please call 634-5452.

⇒ **Westhampton Winter Food Pantry:** The food pantry at the church is stocked with items. Anyone needing food is welcome to come: Mondays & Wednesdays 5-8pm, Fridays 11am - 2PM, Saturdays 9am-12 Noon. It is located in the church kitchen at the back of the church. When open, the doors will be unlocked. The pantry is anonymous and self-serve. To keep the food bank running, they need volunteers to help open and close the pantry. Those interested in helping can sign up here: www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0544ada82ba5ff2-food

⇒ **The Take and Eat ministry** is a non-denominational effort that serves elders and home-bound people in need, preparing and delivering weekend meals for up to 100 clients in Easthampton, Southampton, and Westhampton, on the first, third, and forth Saturday of the month. St. Philip's Episcopal Church and the Westhampton Congregational Church are working together to provide meals on the 4th weekend of every month. If you have any questions or have a specific need, you can call the church at (413) 527-4204 and someone will get back to you.

Nanette's Nook

Nan Clark, a writer of children's animal stories, has provided a story, in couplets, that brings a lighter side to life as we face a new year. It reminds us of two things: that love is more permanent than one thinks and happy endings to stories still lighten an otherwise dreary day. As Nan writes: "This is a true story about my grandmother and a piglet she raised on their farm in Pennsylvania in the 1800s. Her name is Lida Andre." The pig's name is Ted. Looks like Lida was quite a lady. Nan may soon be providing more of Lida's farm stories. We need stories now more than ever. Do you have one you'd like to share? If so, send it to coa@townofchesterfieldma.com.

Pig in the Parlor: A Pig's Tale with a Twist

By Nan Clark

"A pig in the parlor!? Never!" you say:
But that is where Ted was discovered today.

His Missy was missing- "a 'birthing'", they said,
Which, of course, didn't make any sense to her Ted.

He considered this woman to be his Pig Mother
And didn't desire a sister or brother.

After all, she had raised him since he was a runt;
"She can't do without me", he'd boast with a grunt.

A box by the wood stove she'd fixed for his bed;
Nothing was ever too good for her Ted.

His bottle she'd filled with warm milk from her Bossy;
In no time at all Ted was plump, pink and glossy.

She'd scooped out a grapefruit and filled it with mash;
Young Teddy would slurp up that slop in a flash.

He grew and he grew, getting Bigger and BIGGER;
Til famous he was for his Fabulous Figure!

You'd think he was merely a mite of a mouse,
The way that he wandered all over the house.

Today it was different, there could be no doubt;
Ted couldn't push open the door with his snout.

Looked out his kitchen- it couldn't be true!
Just what would you do if it happened to you?

Ted shoved and he grunted and made such a fuss-
That the hired man chased him and told him to hush.

So he settled quite quietly down by the door;
It seemed that he waited forever — or more.

In his pig-perfect mind Ted was wishin' and hopin'
Someone would forget him and leave the door open.

And that's how he wangled his way to the kitchen;
With a rush, and a grunt, and his curly tail twitchin'.

He knew with a sniff there was no one around,
So he searched through the house without making a sound.

He hid when he harkened an old neighbor lady-
A'fussin' and cooin' 'bout someone's new baby.

"You best be a'namin' the darlin'", she said;
And she went to the kitchen, but didn't see Ted.

He waited until he was sure she was gone —
He had to find Missy, he'd lingered too long.

Teddy peeked in the parlor and felt all undone,
On the day-bed his Missy was snugglin' her son.

But seein' her pet pig, she cried out with joy,
"Come closer, my Teddy, you're still my Big Boy!"

"Oh Teddy, you will never know how I missed you;
And now that you're here I am just gonna kiss you!"

Well, Teddy's pig-heart was 'bout burstin' with bliss,
And he squealed his excitement, expectin' her kiss.

Just then the old neighbor returned to the parlor-
Saw Ted by the day-bed and how she did holler!

She tossed her starched apron up over her head;
She shivered and shook and she finally said-

"In all me born days as a birthin' mid-wife
I never did see such a thing in my life!"

A Pig in the Parlor! - You callin' him Teddy-
Me thought you be naming' your baby already."

She snatched up her shawl and homeward she hurried;
Missy laughed and told Teddy he needn't be worried.

She showed him her baby, all pinkish and pouty,
Ted touched his wee toes with the tip of his snouty.

The baby, so small, didn't show any fear-
And he curled a fat fist around Teddy's tough ear.

So Missy and the baby and Teddy were glad;
It was surely the best day that they ever had.

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WANTED: Internet Technician

to coach, consult and problem solve transitions to using computers and life on the internet. Flexible hours, access to work space and resources needed. Looking for someone with experience, good interpersonal skills, patience and pride in seeing people succeed.

Do you know anyone who might be interested in this part-time role?

If so, please contact Jan Gibeau,
Director of Chesterfield Council on Aging:
413-296-4007 or
coa@townofchesterfieldma.com

